

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



PA-845

1
Ag 84
Pro

#845

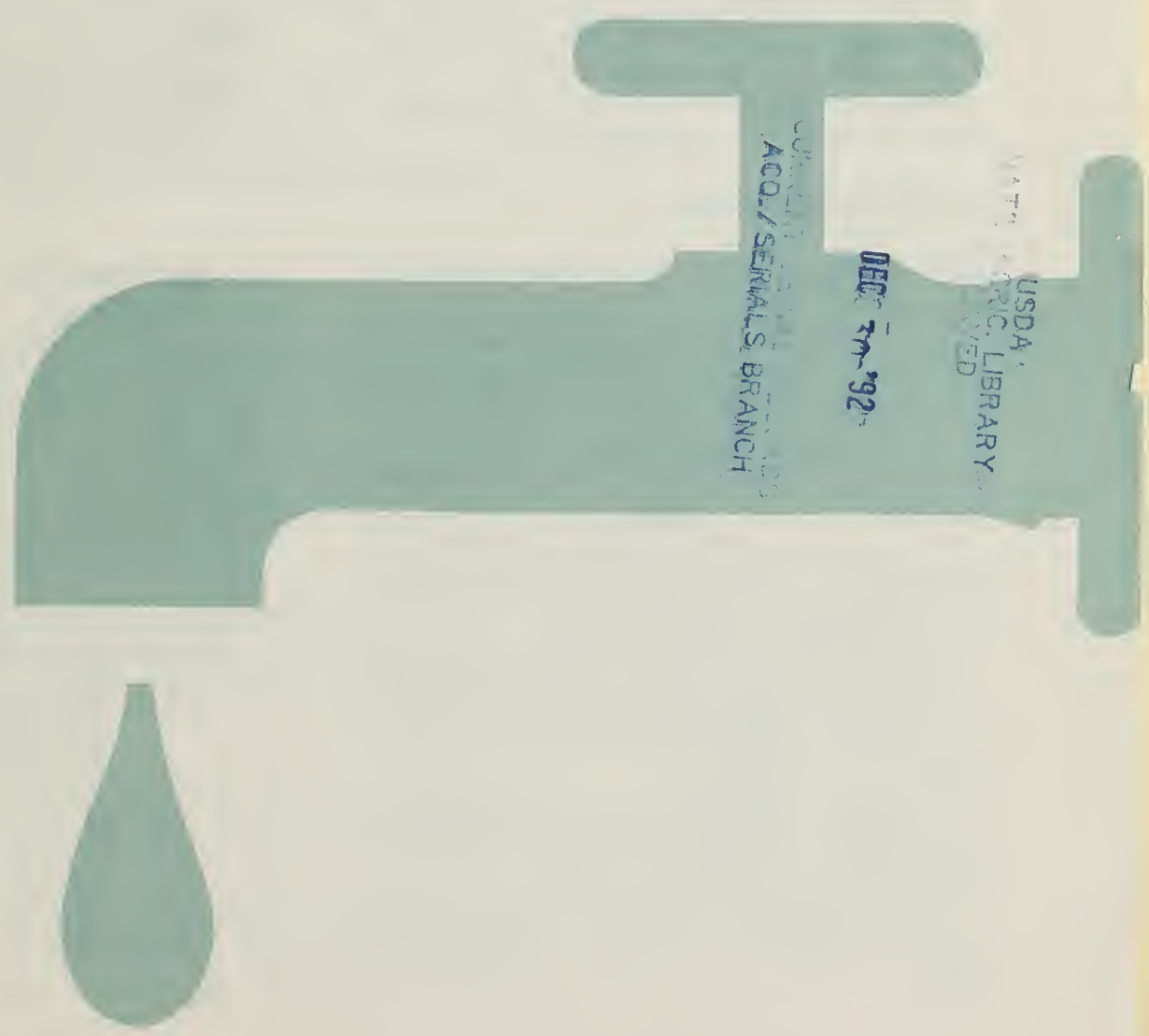
~~File Copy~~

Sta PA-845

THE WATER YOU USE

-- to clean clothes

~~Log: 06/12/86-004~~



Hard Water

Hard water causes laundry problems. Minerals in hard water combine with soap. A lot of the soap forms scum instead of washing clothes. So hard water makes you use more soap, and clothes don't get as clean as they do in soft water.

Soap can turn your clothes gray if it doesn't get rinsed out. Soft water does a better job of rinsing clothes than hard water.

Detergents work well in soft or hard water, unless the water is especially hard.

How To Soften Water

You usually don't need to soften water for detergents.

If you prefer to use soap, you can soften water with a powder that you buy in a package. Or you can buy or rent a machine that softens water. Find out how much the machine costs. Figure out how much the powders cost, too.

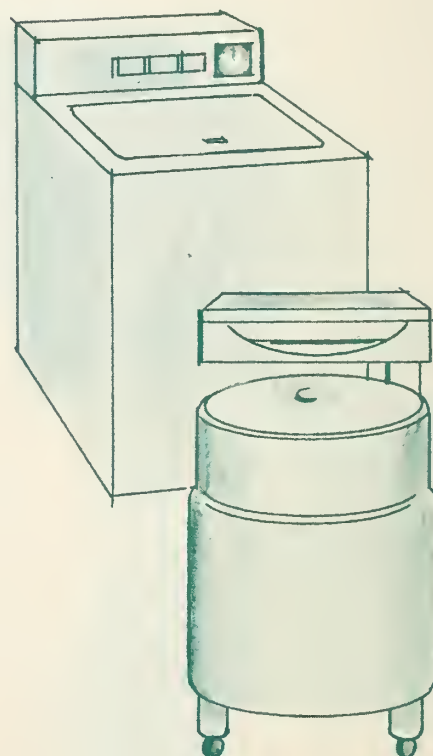
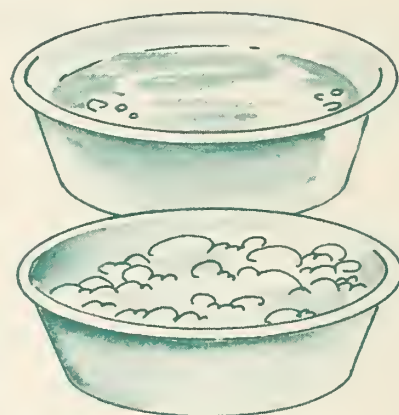
If you use a powder, follow directions on the package. They usually say to add enough to make the water feel slippery.

Non-precipitating softeners (Water conditioners)

Water softeners such as Calgon, Oakite, and White King hold minerals in the water so they can't cause soap scum. The water stays clear.

Add water softener to the wash water before you add the soap or detergent. Use water softener in the rinse water, too.

Non-precipitating softeners work well in either automatic or wringer washing machines.



Precipitating softeners

Water softeners such as Climalene, Melo, and Sal Soda settle out the minerals that make the water hard. The water gets cloudy.

Add the softener to the wash water before adding the soap or synthetic detergent. Add the softener to the first rinse water, too. Rinse the clothes again to wash out the mineral settlements.

Precipitating softeners work better in wringer washers (non-automatic) than in automatics—because you lift the clothes out of the water instead of spinning the water out of the clothes.

Water Temperature

Hot water:

- Is needed to get dirt out of heavily soiled items.
- Kills more germs than cold water.
- Fades the dyes in some colored clothes.
- Tends to wrinkle some modern fabrics like permanent press.

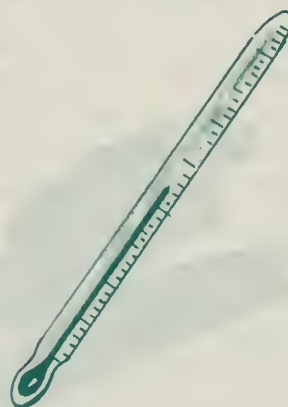
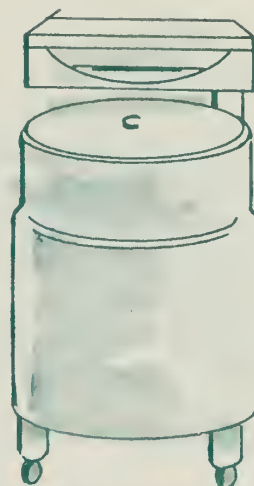
Warm water:

- Usually gets lightly soiled clothes clean.
- Is good for most colored clothes.
- Does not kill germs unless you add a disinfectant.

Cold water:

- Use a cold water detergent, or dissolve powder in hot water before adding to wash water.

NOTE: Water in the washing machine is cooler than in the water heater. For very hot water in the washer, you may need to set the heater temperature high.



Amount Of Water

Good washing action takes plenty of room for clothes to move around. Never crowd the tub. The water, detergent, bleach, and such must be able to go through the clothes to loosen and carry away the soil.

Modern fabrics need even more room to move around in the water than other fabrics.

Fabric Softeners

Fabric softeners and water softeners are not the same. Don't confuse them. Fabric softeners make towels and clothes soft and fluffy. They reduce static electricity that makes clothes cling to your body.

You may want to use them on a few things, but they are expensive. Some brands are Downy, Final Touch, Nu Soft, Sta-Puf.

If you use fabric softeners:

- Add it to the last rinse water. Be sure there is no soap or detergent left in your clothes or it won't work.
- Measure it carefully. Too much will make clothes such as towels or diapers too soft. Then they won't pick up water.

These trade names are used only to help you know what to look for. Many other companies also make and sell water softeners and fabric softeners. The U.S. Department of Agriculture does not recommend one kind more than another.

